

triotic education” of the citizenry. The civic leaders did so by involving the middle classes, in particular, in a variety of initiatives that included the construction of new patriotic monuments, the promotion of cultural institutions like the National Museum of the Italian Risorgimento, sports events, mutual aid societies, and public concerts that encouraged popular identification with national values and pride in Piedmont’s contributions to the unification of Italy. The municipal council had less success in promoting industrial development in the decade after 1865. Despite repeated promises to increase the availability of energy sources for local industry, the city fathers made little headway in this area where supplies remained woefully inadequate.

Nonetheless, predictions of the ex-capital’s imminent demise proved to be premature as the city began to show signs of a modest revival in the 1870s. After its initial drop, the population of Turin, for instance, increased at a faster rate than that of the rest of the peninsula in the decade after 1871, though less than other major urban centers like Milan. By 1881, the city had nearly a quarter of a million residents or 30,000 more than in 1864. Demographic growth testified, in turn, to renewed opportunities for work in the public sector and to a gradual expansion of the city’s industrial economy. Between 1871 and 1881, the ranks of domestic servants and artisans continued to shrink, while the number of people employed in manufacturing rose by 44% and accounted for nearly half of the increase in total population. Such gains led one enthusiastic observer, Vittorio Ellena, to proclaim in 1880 that “the battle for the industrial transformation of the region has been won”. In his parliamentary report of that year, Ellena emphasized, in particular, the vitality of the local chemical industry and textiles. Finally, the decade of the 1870s saw new initiatives in the city’s financial sector with the founding of the Banca di Torino and the Unione banche piemontese e subalpina, which joined an already well-developed sector that included the Banco sconto e sete, the Banca industria e commercio, and the Banca della piccola industria. As a result, by the end of the decade Turin had further consolidated its position as the top financial and banking center in the country.

3. *Injury to Insult: Agricultural and Banking Crises, 1880-1894.*

The people of Turin had little time to enjoy the fruits of the modest recovery in the 1870s. Indeed, the city had to absorb a series of major economic blows during the following two decades. A new round of dif-